



News Release from Congressman
ROB SIMMONS

SECOND DISTRICT , CONNECTICUT

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SIMMONS DEMANDS ANSWERS ON SECURITY CLEARANCE LOGJAM

*Lawmaker Sends Strongly Worded Letter Blasting Decision That Hurts National
Security, Electric Boat Workers*

WASHINGTON, DC - Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Second District, today said a reported moratorium on security clearances for submarine-builder Electric Boat (EB) and other government contractors is unacceptable and demanded immediate attention. The House Armed Services Committee member, whose district includes EB, said he planned to offer legislation in the upcoming defense authorization bill to get answers out of the Department of Defense. The committee will begin consideration of the defense bill for consideration tomorrow morning.

Simmons blasted DOD for failing to inform Congress of the impending stoppage. "This situation is unacceptable," Simmons said. "The fact that no one bothered to warn Congress of this crash and ask for assistance shows a serious failure of leadership on national security. Certain people have known about this growing problem for months, but opted to sit on their hands and do nothing."

Facing a backlog of several thousand applications and a funding shortfall, the U.S. government stopped processing security clearances for government contractors last week, a Pentagon spokeswoman confirmed. Electric Boat employees require a security clearance to perform their duties.

In 2005, the U.S. Government transferred responsibility for security clearance background checks from the DSS, a Department of Defense agency, to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). DSS, however, maintained responsibility for funding the activity.

Simmons opposed the 2005 move publicly because he was unconvinced that the bureaucratic reshuffling would not make an already bad situation worse. At the time, DSS officials assured Simmons several times that the move would improve matters and help clear up the backlog of applications.

In 2005, the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office designated DOD's security clearance program as a high-risk area "because its delays in issuing clearances can affect national security."

"As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have worked tirelessly on the federal government's security clearance process. I represent thousands of workers at General Dynamic's Electric Boat, a critical defense industrial base asset whose successful operations depend on security clearances for its employees," Simmons wrote today in a letter to the acting director of the DSS.

Simmons also said today that he would call on the House Armed Services Committee to hold a hearing on the matter. Simmons is a member of the House Readiness Subcommittee, with responsibility for DOD security clearance matters.

The May 2 letter is attached.

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